



Hertford College. Oxford
23rd December 1881.

My Lord

The curious specimen
of early printing which a note
bears this note, has together
with another copy, been safely
found in the library of
this College. The Society has
not forgotten, and I trust
you will forget, your
solicitude in perfecting
our antique edition of
Chaucer, as a proof whereof
is tho' but a trivial one.

we beg your acceptance of
the "Wednesdays fast"
we have ascertained that it
is not to be found in the
Bodleian library. and have
reason to believe that no
other library in Oxford
possesses it.

I have the honor to be

My dear
your most obed^t & aff^d Servant.

Robert Tharsham

Barren of Norton

Wednesdaies faste,



Sequuntur hic decem fructus et fertilitates ieiunij et abstinencie: quibus omnibus et singulis merita ac premia acquiruntur eterna: prout hic consequenter exarat quidam metricus.

Ieiunare quidem castigat corpora prudens
Per quod calcatur: mundus deus et piamator
Cor quoque carnale: faciet cito spirituale
Hoc opus branicum: menti dat flammis actum
Et veniam vere: peccata que vult abolere
Pandere misteria poterunt ieiunia dia
Sternunt et fastum: faciunt hominem fore castum
Et portas celi referant cuiusque fidei.

The Wednesdayes abstynence and holy faste
Haloweth mennes soules/and maketh them chaste
In the mynde wherof/clerely shall appere
This lytell bryefe treatyse/Wryten in this manere

In the worshyp of Johan Baptyst/and Katheryne
Crystofre and Margarete/ I make this doctryne
Why thou shalte fast or fleishe leue
The Wednesdayes/as I shall by examples proue
Thyrtty and one yf thou wylte take hede
And this lytell boke dothe here or rede

The fyrst cause is/in þe begynnyng of lent
Out of þe chyrche/is put þe soke pnytent
In token of Adam/that lost paradysse
For eatynge of an apple of greete pryse

At thousande. CC. yeres/after Noes flode
Was no wyne dronke/ne fleshe eate to mannes fode
And for certayne synne god cursed y lande & not y see
Leue thou fleshe y wednesday/& with fylshe fede y

Kynge Edgar/for loue of saynt Katheryne
Made feestes the wednesdaye/with fleshe & wyne
In a nyghte to hym a voyce was sende
Thou fedest not me/ but rather the fende

The duke of Norfolke/with his menep
Rowed out on a tyme/and drowned were they
All saue the lord and one man in faye
That lefte fleshe meate vpon the wednesdaye

Mercury is lord/of marchauntes as I rede
Wherfore the wednesdaye/they fast for good spede
And as they do penaunce/for the worldes wele
I counseyll do thou the same/for thy soule hele

Israell thzough fastynge/the red see hath easte
And Josue the conquerour/whan that he faste
All one daye the sonne abode/or Gabaon were day
Than fede y not with fleshe/vpon y wednesdaye

The bysshop of halomes herper/all this he spake
That dyed longe afore/he that wyll forsake
Fleshe on y wednesdaye/Joy & rest shal haue alway
And for frydayes souper shall synge welawaye

A.ij.

Moyles fasted to take the lawe/and so dyd Helys
That in a fyry chayre/was lyfte vp to paradyse
Than leue þ fleshe the wednesdaye/ & on it thynke
Though þ haue but lytell more/ than breed & dryke

Kynge Dauid fasted for mercy/ Ninue dyd þ same
And had forgyft of synne/ þ vengeaunce hym bename
Than absteyue the ofte/ thus sayth saynt Austyn
He that serueth glotony/ is prompte to euery synne

Danyell fasted and sawe the preuytees of heuen
And throughe þ myght of god/ ouercame lyons. vii.
Than fast þ whyle thou mayst/ to be clene fro synne
For þ ne wotest day ne houre/ whā þ shalte go hyne

Gelyde yorke a wyfe/ this fastynge toke
To breed and water/ and ones it broke
A fayre chylde her mette reprouynge her soze
Chargynge her beware/ and do so no more

As blessed Bede telleth in his booke
Saynt Arctan on a wednesday for eatynge of a doke
Was beaten in his dreame full soze of a chylde
That a moneth in his skynne þ stroke he felt wyld

Another cause I fynde/ that on a wednesdaye
Judas ymagyned/ our lorde to betraye
And hym to deth do as a seruaunt moost yll
Therfore on þ wednesdaye son what leue thy wyll

Xl. dayes Chryst fasted/everlastēge preest & kyng
Wherfore his shepe sparpled/to folde he can brynge
And ouercame the deuyl that dampned is for euer
Than of fastynge take hede/and lustes loue þ̄ neuer

ferthermore to the decre/ I praye that thou go
And rede de esu carnium in capitulo
Where he sayth the Wednesdaye/the frydaye also
Sholde be truly fasted to kepe men fro wo

In Uitas patrum eke/Who so wyll take hede
The frydaye to fast/the Wednesdaye to absteyne
From fleshe and fatte meates/it was decreed
To obserue and kepe/vpon a certayne payne

Saynt Nycolas a chylde/bothe holy and meke
The Wednesdaye and frydaye/but ones he seke
His mothers brestes/but than he wolde them spare
The holy goost him taught/thā leue thy lustes fare

In Irelande I rede/of a full greate wonder
A quarrey was fall/and a man laye there vnder
And was there fyue dayes/and at last was shyue
For he dyd on Wednesday forbere fleshe all his lyue

A shyp of Dartmouth was saylēge to saynt James
They cast out a deed man/thā came agayne þ̄ same
And founde hym on þ̄ stronde þ̄ ouer boorde was cast
That spake & had his ryghtes/for Wednesdaye fast

A.ij.

There was a shyp of .lxxx. called the george of lynne
In whome there was truely/more than .C. xl. men
And all were drowned/and spylled saue twaye
That ete .i. a .fsh: on the wednesdaye

Our lord at his feest/bleised breed and fyssh
Fyue. .x. men he fedde/and there was no fleshe
Than whan thou soupest/fyssh loke thou vse
And whyte meate at thy bozde/þ shalte not refuse

The wednesday in the olde lawe/was fasted truely
For the better helthe/body and goostly
Than vse thou no fat meates/that day in thy dyshe
Though þ make .ij. meles ete whyte meet or fyssh

Under a castell wall/there was founde a man
C. yere and .i. in the duchy of Wyre
These wordes he spak for the wednesdaye
Untyll I haue a prece/ I shall neuer daye

On a wednesdaye forsothe as I tell it you
He began his fastynge/our lord Iesu
Than do thou the same/I counseyll the and praye
All maner of fat meates/leue thou the wednesdaye

Beside Bystowe I fynde/that there was a man
Whiche for faute of ryches/bounde hym to sathan
He tumbled ouer a clyffe/his body all to brake
yet he had his ryghtes/for wednesdayes sake.

The Wednesday I rede/Chryste healed a man
Of the fallynge euyl/and he sayd than
That prayer and fastynge take this in mynde
Sholde heale that sycknesse/and auoyde the fende

At the batayll of Durham/I rede there was a heed
Fyfty yere vnder the erthe/that laye so longe deed
A squyre herde a boyce/that rode the water by
For Wednesdayes fast after a preest I cry

For helthe of the soule/all this is spoke
Now for the body/medycyne thou loke
As Galen the leche sayth chaunge thy meale
And truely thy stomacke/shall haue the better heale

There was in dozzet/a greete meruayll to here
On a Wednesdaye was layd a capon to the fyre
Thre oures and more/and euer he was rawe
Thā leue thou fleshe y^e daye/for reasons y^e I shewe

There was a man of lawe/besyde Wodestocke
That fell from his horse/his necke was to broke
For he fasted the Wednesdaye/euer spake the heed
Unto I haue a preest/shall I neuer be deed

In the worshyp of god and saynt Katheryne
Margarete and crystofre/ys thou the abstayne
Fro fleshe on the Wednesdaye/for Iohan Baptyst
Thou shalt not lacke/at thyne ende to haue a preest

The Wednesdaye the clargye of our fathers afore
 Forsoke fleshe/and some dyd moche more
 Fasted one mele theyr soules to saue
 And the kyngdome of heuen/the rather to haue
 The whiche he vs graunt/that hanged on the rode
 Chryste that vs bought With his precyous blode

Thus endeth the fastynge for Wednesdaye.
 Imprynted at London in Fleetestrete at the
 sygne of the Sonne by me Wynkyn de
 Worde. In the yere of our lord. M.
 CCCC. and. XXXij.





